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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 news coverage on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, on suspected Chinese submarine movement in the waters near Kaohsiung on January 27, and on the college entrance exams for Taiwan senior high school students.

¶2. Almost every paper discussed the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. A column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" said the arms sales come at the right time to test the ambiguous relationship between China and the Ma administration and whether the Ma administration really wants to purchase weapons from the United States. A separate "Liberty Times" analysis discussed U.S. beef imports to Taiwan. The article said Washington has got what it wants -- namely, to secure the export of its bone-in beef to Taiwan. An editorial and a column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" both discussed the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. The editorial said a huge crisis in terms of U.S.-Taiwan relations is hiding behind the arms sales, and the column also said that one has seen obvious changes in terms of Taiwan's position in the United States Asia-Pacific strategy. A column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" also discussed the impact of the U.S. arms sales and U.S. beef imports to U.S.-Taiwan relations. The article concluded by saying that subtle changes have been observed in U.S.-Taiwan relations. End summary.

A) "Headache Time for the Ma Administration"

The "Free Talk" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] wrote (2/1):

"The United States has approved its arms sales [package] to Taiwan, which, even without the F-16 fighter jets and submarines that Taiwan desires most, has already made China fly into a rage. The Ma administration, on the other hand, is holding a hot potato in its hands, fearing that it will enrage China if it decides to buy [the weapons], while it will surely make the Taiwan people very angry if it decides not to. As it stands, these weapons admittedly will not be able to alter the [military] balance in the Taiwan Strait, but they have accidentally become a touchstone to test the ambiguous relationship between China and the Ma administration. ...

"As a matter of fact, Ma's tilting toward China has not only made Taiwan a victim, but also worried and saddened the free world and the Western world. The U.S. role of sole superpower in the world has been gradually threatened by China. ... While seeking to bring India into the fold to counterbalance China, the United States of course will not forget Taiwan, the unsinkable aircraft carrier on the Pacific. It's just that Ma's staunchly pro-China position, which has been exposed since he assumed office, has caused the U.S. government to doubt whether [Taiwan] will remain a staunch ally of the United States. Already there are calls in the U.S. academic circle for only selling weapons to Taiwan but not helping to defend the island. This is because they believe that if the Ma administration itself has befriended China and actively given up Taiwan's sovereignty, why then should American soldiers sacrifice their lives to protect Taiwan?

"As a result, the Obama administration's approval of arms sales to Taiwan this time is indeed a very good idea. On the one hand, it allows Taiwan to retain its fundamental defense capabilities, while on the other, it can test whether the Ma administration is genuinely interested in buying weapons or it was simply lip service. The Ma administration has now arrived at a three-way junction of the United States, China and the Taiwan people; the direction he should pick will be a big headache for him."

B) "The United States Has Long Got What It Wants; Ma Administration Has Lost It All"

Journalist Fan Cheng-shiang noted in an analysis in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] (1/30):

"Authoritative sources revealed that regarding opening [Taiwan's market] to the U.S. beef, the Ma administration's original plan was that 'Washington would owe Taiwan once.' But unexpectedly, it turned out to be 'Taiwan owing the United States once,' and Taiwan has lost very badly. In addition to the cleverness of the U.S. government, the Ma administration's severe miscalculation of the backlash from the Taiwan public and the chaos [the U.S. beef controversy has triggered] in Taiwan are also the main reasons that have resulted in the United States getting an advantage, both in fame and fortune. ...

"Sources emphasized that in terms of U.S. beef imports to Taiwan, 'the United States has got what it wanted.' Washington, from the very beginning, wanted to [export to Taiwan] its bone-in beef, which accounts for 98 percent of [its beef trade with Taiwan], and its target has never been the dispensable risky parts of U.S. beef. '[Selling of] ground beef and beef offal were just tactics the United States used to deceive and disturb.' The Legislative Yuan

passed the [food sanitation] law, and our people were quite pleased that we had restricted the imports of [U.S.] ground beef and beef offal. Yet Washington was laughing secretly that Taipei had walked into its trap, because it was akin to 'making a law' that guarantees the export of bone-in beef to Taiwan.

"Regarding reports that Washington is considering bringing the case to the World Trade Organization as a response to the U.S. beef [controversy in Taiwan], informed sources interpreted such 'leaking of information' as hopes [on the U.S. side] that it will exercise pressure on Taiwan, which is implementing the series of administrative measures [on U.S. beef imports]. That way it can proactively 'accelerate' the pace to normalize Taiwan's import of U.S. bone-in beef from cattle less than 30 months of age. ... During President Ma's transit through the United States this time, Washington hoped that Ma would promise that Taiwan would not 'unilaterally abrogate' its agreements [with the United States] again. In the meantime, Taipei also 'openly' reminded Washington that in the U.S. beef case, Washington has got what it wants and should know when to stop. Taipei also expressed hopes that both Taiwan and the United States can put their focus on pragmatically beginning [bilateral] cooperation on aspects such as trade, economics, culture and security strategy."

C) "A Huge Shadow behind the [U.S.] Arms Sales [to Taiwan]"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 530,000] editorialized (2/1):

"The United States has finally announced its arms sales items to Taiwan this year. ...What is noteworthy is that in the midst of the arms sales announcement, there seemed to be some insignificant details, behind which a huge crisis is hiding. It reminds us of the warning that 'the devil is in the details.' U.S. National Security Advisor General James Jones said on January 29: '[Washington] will likely have consultations with China about arms sales to Taiwan.' What does this statement reveal? The cornerstone of Taiwan's security lies in the 'Taiwan Relations Act,' but on the implementation level, it is based on the 'Six Assurances' made by the Reagan administration to Taiwan, ... which have served as guiding principles for Washington in handling U.S.-Taiwan relations since 1982. Over the past 28 years, these principles have never once been violated, even when [President] George W. Bush and A-bian were on bad terms. But lately one can detect ...that the six

assurances are gradually eroding....

"Does the Ma administration really believe that Jones' statement is a slip of tongue? Or was it something revealed subconsciously during the process when the White House leadership was gradually forming a consensus? ... According to U.S. media reports, Beijing is spending huge amounts of money buying off and lobbying the [U.S.] Congress, think tanks, and scholars to seek to abolish the [Taiwan Relations] Act and to stop selling weapons [to Taiwan]. The power and trend of such a growing force can be seen in recent articles and calls [made] in the United States. Are Taiwan officials still saying: 'U.S.-Taiwan relations remain unchanged'?"

D) "Blue Team Has Vanished"

Columnist Antonio Chiang wrote in his column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 530,000] (2/1):

"Every time when Washington announced arms sales to Taiwan, Beijing issued solemn protests and temporarily called off some exchange programs [with the United States]. It appears that this has become a routine ritual. Beijing knows that Washington has to sell [weapons to Taipei], and Washington knows that Beijing has to protest against it. It has been like this for more than a decade, but what is different is that [we have seen] significant changes in Taiwan's position in the United States' Asia-Pacific strategy. In the arms sales package this time, the Blackhawk helicopters, Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles, mine-hunting ships, and C4ISR systems are old items [proposed during] the Bian administration, but the price tags have gone up considerably. Still there is no news about the F-16 C/D fighters and submarines that Taiwan wants most. Hardly any optimistic signs can be seen in [current] Taiwan-U.S. relations. ...

"[The weapons] that the United States is selling Taiwan are all secondary outdated products, and there is a big gap between these weapons and those [Washington] sells to Israel, Japan or South Korea. The United States will not sell its most recently-developed weapons or offensive weapons to Taiwan, and Beijing is clearly aware of that. [Beijing and Washington] have a tacit understanding about it, because the military significance of such arms sales [to Taiwan] is far less than the announcement [of the arms sales] itself, and the political significance of the arms sales is much higher than its international value. Taiwan holds a place in the United States' strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. But with the rise of China's

national strength and the Ma administration's tilting toward mainland China, subtle changes have emerged in Taiwan-U.S. relations. On the surface, [we see that] arms sales go on as usual, but the United States deliberately will not give what Taiwan really wants. What is really serious is that the voices of the 'blue team,' which has supported Taiwan for a long time, can hardly be heard any more. ..."

E) "The Taste of Weapons plus Beef"

The "Black and White" column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (2/1):

"Various developments have been seen regarding [U.S.] arms sales to Taiwan and the [U.S.] beef [controversy], respectively, prior to and in the wake of President Ma's transit through the United States. The Obama administration announced that it would sell weapons worth NTD 200 billion to Taiwan on the one hand, and rumors had it that Washington will appeal to the World Trade Organization about Taiwan's restrictions on U.S. beef [imports]. Between this goodwill and tension, one can see subtle changes in the triangular relationship between Washington, Beijing and Taipei. ...

"In terms of U.S. beef, Taiwan indeed has striven for more self initiative and dignity. But judging from a bigger perspective, we may also have to pay a higher price for this, including changes in the price tags of the arms sales, procrastination in the bilateral trade and economic talks, and also the blisters in Taiwan-U.S. relations. If one wants to carefully and seriously calculate the gains and losses, [one has to ask:] Is it really wise for the ruling and opposition parties to jointly revise the [food sanitation] law? The answer is probably no. ..."

